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TAGS: PGOV SCUL KPAO PINR PHUM EAID IZ

SUBJECT: NINEWA: TERRORISTS, CRIMINALS AND NON-SUNNI  
DEPARTURES CHALLENGE UNIVERSITY

REF: 06 BAGHDAD 4504

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader Jason Hyland: 1.4 (B) and (D).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

¶1. (C) Summary: Although Mosul University in the northern Iraqi province of Ninewa has operated nearly continuously since 2003, the triple threats of terrorist infiltration, criminal activity and a gutting of the non-Sunni student population and professoriate threaten the institution. During an August 8 call by Deputy Commander 4/1 Brigade Combat Team and IPAO Hankey, University President Obay Dawachi said he recognizes these problems on the 30,000-student campus but rejected outside help from either the GOI or Coalition Forces. Bio notes in para 4. END  
SUMMARY

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#### ----- Security and Criminal Threats

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¶2. (C) Obay said most potential terrorism threats at the university originate with students from the History Department who come from homes outside Mosul. Additionally, he claimed that 95 percent of the institution's Ministry of Interior guards are former Iraqi Army with Baath Party sympathies. Criminal extortion, he said, has forced the University to halt all construction projects. Despite these security challenges on his campus, Obay said increased cooperation with local police "is not a solution." Rather, he provided a vague assurance that he would use his own resources to look into any accusations of terrorist connections.

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#### ----- Non-Sunnis Leaving University

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¶3. (C) Following sectarian violence earlier this year between Yezidis, a small religious minority that predominantly lives in northern Iraq, and Muslims in Ninewa province, Obay said all Yezidi students and 90 percent of Christian students have refused to return to Mosul University when classes begin October 1 (Note. This amounts to approximately several hundred students. End Note). Just as these students sought safety in the Kurdish provinces ) the Yezidis took their spring exams at Dohuk University in neighboring Kurdistan ) minority professors at Mosul University have begun to look for positions in the Kurdish provinces, Obay said. Attacks have also increased against Shias, with Obay citing an increase from five Shia students killed two years ago to 12 in the last academic year. As minority students leave Mosul, Obay's assistant said, new Sunni students from Ninewa, Diyala and Kirkuk will take their place in the fall.

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#### ----- Biographic Notes on Obay Dawachi

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¶4. (C) Obay Dawachi, a fluent English speaker, is a Sunni

Arab who received an undergraduate degree in administration from England and a doctorate in administration from France. He has been president of Mosul University since at least 2005. Prior to that, he spent 1996-1997 on sabbatical at Hadramawt University in Mukalla, Yemen. He said his family, particularly his still living father, is highly respected in Mosul. He has ties to Syria, where he sometimes spends his vacations. Coalition Forces have had occasional, cordial meetings with Obay since at least 2005. Obay said he has no party affiliation.

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Comment  
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15. (S) Obay recognizes our strong expectation that he take concrete measures to root out terrorist activities at his university, but he did not articulate any actionable plans. Obay has one of the most difficult jobs in the province, as he tries to rebuild a university with a great tradition in the face of poor resources, a tough security environment and ) by all accounts ) a hard core of radicalism on the campus. We do not know how much of his apparent inaction on the terrorist threat within the university is the reflection of his desire for self-preservation and how much reflects his personal sympathies with Sunni Arab extremists. He also said he wants to maintain a multi-sectarian, multi-ethnic university but the upcoming academic year's student population will be the most heavily Sunni in years. The PRT will continue to find ways to engage with Obay and the university because the healthy revival of this once-famous university would be a source of great pride for the province, act as a catalyst for economic and political reform, and close off a key extremist organizing point in northern Iraq.

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